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PSYCHOLOGY AND SCIENTIFIC METHODS

AN APOLOGY FOR TRADITION

THE tourist interested in the places where old books are for sale notices very quickly a great difference between the shops of France and the shops of Germany, in which naturally, the supply consists chiefly of German books. In France, such an abundance of old books in gracious, simple bindings, the thin lines of gold gleaming discreetly along the edges! The noble type and the clean, firm paper show what sure workmen there were under the old régime and what excellent materials they had. But the German books of the same period are of quite a different sort, shabby covers and an impression that was called, in some school-classic I have read, a *Lösch-papiereindruck*. The word was, I believe, attributed to Frederick the Great, who could make comparisons.

Of course this observation is true only of old books. The German book-makers of to-day are equal to the best anywhere. But in a book-shop of Paris one gets a great impression of what these beautiful old editions signify,—a long sequence of humanized culture, of urbanity and judgment; in short, they testify to what is called, for lack of a better term, the “classical tradition.”

Let me illustrate it by a passage from Donnay’s play “The Return from Jerusalem.” The scene¹ presents the husband Michel, a Frenchman native to the traditions of his country, in conversation with a group of friends of his clever Jewish wife. They have foreign names, German and Polish, and it is clear that, not having their roots in the soil of France, they can not feel as Michel does toward *la patrie*.

Vowenberg says, “Oh, one’s country! Won’t you tell me what that means? You are going to say that your country is France. That is only a geographical expression. We are asking you for a reasonable definition.” To which Michel replies: “I don’t know whether my definition will strike you as reasonable, but it seems to me that one’s country is made up of glorious victories and heroic defeats, of fine examples of sacrifice and virtue. It means cathe-

¹ Maurice Donnay, *Le Retour de Jerusalem*, Acte III., scène I.

drals, palaces, and tombs—landscapes that one knew as a child and other scenes which, later on, have framed hours of sadness or of joy: it means intimate things, memories, traditions, customs—it is a language that seems the most sweet, it is an old song, an old proverb full of good sense, it is a rose that goes by the name of France, a bit of old porcelain. How shall I put it? Yes, one's country is all that—and much more."

This declaration that Donnay puts into the mouth of his character is supported by what a tourist feels after a fair acquaintance with Germany and France. Germany, just because she had no great tradition that created a natural loyalty, has been more forward-looking, and the word progress is used more naturally there than in a country where the seventeenth century was "*le grand siècle*" and where only a few years ago Joan of Arc was made a saint of the Catholic church. Descartes, could he observe and decide, might qualify his preference for systems made by one hand. What he most esteemed, a clear and distinct dialectic, appears now in an unexpected light. One great fault of the German thinking has been its dialectical character. An initial point of view has made it dogmatic and incapable of education through experience. The "classical" point of view, on the contrary, incorporates the lessons of experience in civilization, the principles of urbanity and social compromise, rules established by matured and tested culture, an empirical background of tradition, instead of the will defiant of experience. The "classical" point of view has a place for the chivalrous and social instincts, the justified conventions of national and international procedure. This instinctive sociability of the civilized man, as contrasted with the categorical *Ueberzeugung* of the one less at home in civilization, is, I think, what Boutroux refers to² when he indicates sentiment as a saving principle where an exclusive confidence in intellect and will have led thinkers so tragically astray. Sentiment, thus understood, leads to tolerance, something that neither the spirit of science in its stricter mood, nor the categorical imperative can justify philosophically, but which is characteristic of all real men and women of the world.

Although it is now nearly two years since the dean of French philosophers wrote the lectures referred to, the words of so humane and so mature a thinker have but gained in interest. Very late in our study of philosophy we are learning something of the German point of view, of what is, after all, an intellectual fruition. It is a point of view sincerely, even devoutly, entertained, articulate and thought through, a real philosophy that translates into action, and

² Emile Boutroux, *Philosophy and War*, New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1916. Pp. xi + 212. The preface is dated Paris, Dec. 24, 1915.

its prophets have been candid enough in proclaiming it. But philosophy does not nest exclusively in the writings of professors, and that may be why so many of us have tended to overlook this one.³

"When, in 1877, I was engaged in the French translation of Zeller's *History of Greek Philosophy*, I attempted to show that man was left out of account in that profound and learned study, one of the most original manifestations of human genius; that the theories of Socrates, Plato, or Aristotle were gradually stripped of all they contained which was personal and living, and were reduced to abstract formulæ, subordinate to an immanent and necessary dialectic."⁴

M. Boutroux is certainly not alone in his impression, although it has taken most of us much longer to make the discovery. What he calls the "classic tradition" takes man into account because its roots go deep into the tradition of social experience. The contrast between the German point of view and the point of view represented by Montaigne, Voltaire, Goethe, Mazzini, and Mill deserves a better statement than it is, for some time, at least, likely to get. Moreover, we can not refute a coherent philosophy with haphazard indignation; we can not refute in that way even a sentimental philosophy like the present-day pacificism. If the German enterprise is the expression of a point of view, and if we intend to resist that enterprise, our own undertaking must have its philosophy no less articulate and consistent. Its formulation will not be an easy matter, but no intellectual adventure is, just now, more important and more truly philosophical. Every contribution should be noted and understood. That is one reason for calling attention, thus tardily, to Boutroux's little book.

No one disputes the industry of the Germans in accumulating data, but we do often hear it said that this industry lacks discrimination. The ideal of perfect objectivity which the Germans claim as their own requires that the point of view be yielded automatically by the completed collection of data, and discrimination between what is relevant and what is irrelevant involves reference to an idea that is antecedent to this collection. Without the antecedent idea the collection must be the mere heap for the making of which the Germans are so often said to show a particular genius. As Boutroux puts it, "the critical point in German science is the transition from the fact to the idea" (p. 5). He has, of course, especially in mind, the sciences of human affairs, and as we now see, this transition, which is the interpretation of the fact, is governed by the German

³ For an excellent account of the philosophy of Pan-Germanism, see *Collection de documents sur le pangermanisme*, publiés sous la direction de M. Charles Andler, Paris, Louis Conard, 1915. 4 vols.

⁴ Boutroux, *Philosophy and War*, p. 2.

point of view, than which, it seems to us, nothing could be more subjective.

When Germany first sent her men into Belgium, one of the things that we were told was going to fight for her was the categorical imperative. It is, of course, an old story that this is a principle of pure subjectivity. Boutroux reminds us that "In Germany more particularly we are continually hearing in ordinary conversation the formula, '*Ich bin fest ueberzeugt*'" (p. 10); and also, "Now the notion of duty as a purely formal categorical imperative—*i. e.*, void of all content and matter—is singularly dangerous of application. In real life one can not be satisfied with a purely formal act of willing: something must necessarily be willed, some matter must be fitted into this empty mold. The categorical imperative, however, remains dumb when questioned as to what it commands. Consequently we are led to seek, not in the world of will, but in the other, the visible world, the only one we are able to cognize, for the matter indispensable to the attainment of a real act. The two worlds, however, the physical and the moral, are by hypothesis wholly heterogeneous and unconcerned with each other. Hence we arrive at the following conclusion: any act, provided it is performed under the idea of duty, may assume a moral character. No morality or immorality could be attributed to an act considered in its visible aspect; only the form of will in which we clothe it makes it morally praiseworthy or blamable." In ethics, "the sole object of certitude is the form of the action to the exclusion of its matter" (p. 19).

In contrast to conviction, the "matter" is the region of truth, the data for intellect, and the irreconcilability of will and intellect is an old theme of Kantian dialectic. The effort may be and has been made to reduce each to the other. Fichte is, of course, the philosopher in whose hands the will became the supreme principle. "Works are nothing; faith is everything. A maxim is good and true if it is accepted with a sense of conviction, if the will recognizes in it its own tendency. All the rules of the true, the good, and the beautiful which classic reason has attempted to set up are ineffectual. These rules, in the philosophy of interiority, are but the substitution of the letter for the spirit, of inertia for liberty, of death for life. The original creation alone, drawing its principle from the absolute will, is beautiful and productive. All works that are original and not imitative, however strange, are true and worthy to be set up for the admiration of men; but every work to the production of which the observance of some rule has contributed is, for that very reason, shallow and lifeless" (pp. 32-33). On the other hand, to reduce will to intellect, to indulge in the illusion

that one is "scientific" without compromise has been to enthrone the dialectic of physical science over the subject-matter of human nature; to say that the physical world is all spirit has resulted in saying that spirit was all physical.

The trouble results, Boutroux thinks, in the neglect of what he calls sentiment and which functions in a reconciling and somewhat Kantian fashion. Upon this cardinal point, however, the author is far from clear. It is certainly a surprise to the present writer to read, "Now, the philosophy which tries to discover in feeling the principle of certitude and truth has been called radical empiricism" (p. 39). This mention of James's idea may, however, throw some light on what Boutroux means by sentiment, the term which the introductory remarks were intended to elucidate.

No one can fail to see how, as Boutroux uses it, sentiment is functionally analogous to the subject-matter of Kant's third critique, and that critique was called for because, to quote again, "The German soul was still divided . . . between two separate worlds—the world of phenomena, as Kant calls it, a shapeless inert mass, and the world of noumena, a transcendent domain of the spiritual and the ideal" (p. 57). What matter was to spirit, the invading hosts of Napoleon were to the Germans whom Fichte sought to inspire with the fictions of *Deutschheit* and *Ursprache*. It is worth noting, however, that these patriotic fictions were instruments with which to assist in repelling invasion by a foreign foe. Their spirit could be symbolized as well by Verdun in 1916 as by Leipzig in 1813. Thus, although the philosophy that expressed the united effort against Napoleon has been so inverted as to become the instrument of just such an enterprise as it was originally directed against, that philosophy was at its birth a noble thing and our admiration of its temper should not be lost in the feelings evoked by the modern misuse of it. That complete inversion of a noble philosophy by which a summons to repel the invader has been transformed into an argument for invading the rest of the world is an achievement in sophistry that can hardly be matched.

Those to whom German idealism has not been merely an affair of epistemology, nor yet a device in Christian apologetics, have usually esteemed it for its social and political point of view. Here the philosophy of the Greek city state was recovered and the suppression of the individual by Hegel seemed justified by the great wisdom of Plato. But Germany should have bewared the Greeks, *dona ferentes*. That philosophy of the city state signified the hopelessness of all federal programmes. It is a philosophy anti-federal in spirit, what we call to-day anti-international. Plato says clearly that his state can have no individuals because it must stand alone.

To quote again from Boutroux, "Spirit to Hegel, is not only an invisible, supernatural power; it has created for itself a world within this world of ours, and attains to supreme realization in a certain force, both material and spiritual, which is none other than what is called the state. The state is the highest of all realities; above it in the world of existence there is nothing. Its function is to organize liberty—i. e., to abolish individual wills and transform them into one common will, which, through its mass and unity of direction, will be capable of making itself inevitable. The State, supreme intermediary between the World and God, spirit being transmuted into force, is the divine instrument for the realization of the ideal" (p. 60). Again, "And, lastly, the *chef d'œuvre* of German culture, that which really, according to the Kaiser's definition, makes it a *Kultur*, and not simply an external polish, such as is found in the Latins, is the moral constitution of man, the total abolition of the idea of right, and its substitution by the sane, virile, and religious idea of duty" (p. 69).

Those loyal students of the ideal who have found so much light in Hegel never understood the antagonisms implicit in this German revamping of a Greek conception. As Professor Munroe Smith puts it,⁵ speaking of more recent theorists: "German thinkers did not ignore the fact that in human society conscious cooperation had introduced a new factor, but they restricted its operation to the single group, and they refused to recognize that civilization had developed any group worthy of consideration except the national state. Among national states the law of survival through struggle maintained unmitigated sway.

"Germany's refusal to recognize the world, even the civilized world, as a society in which cooperation had to any degree displaced or could advantageously displace survival through struggle, found expression in legal theory. The dogma of the unlimited and irresponsible sovereignty of the state was accentuated. This dogma was no product of German or of modern thought. It had come down from the Roman Empire, which included the whole civilized world. The development and coexistence of a number of great civilized states has obviously destroyed the original basis of the dogma; as Professor Lammasch, of Graz, has recently argued, modern states are necessarily members of a society of nations, and no single state can claim, much less exercise, irresponsible power; but in Germany, and also in other parts of the world, absolute sovereignty is still attributed to the several states. It is of course a corollary of this dogma that international rules and customs bind the single state

⁵ *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. XXXII., pp. 459-479.

only in so far as it accepts them, and only so long as its peculiar interests do not require their abandonment."

This matter of the relation of the individual to the state bears upon the observation frequently made, that what to the German is manifestly objective is no less manifestly subjective to everybody else. To the German, society, in the important sense, exists only in Germany. The German, since he receives his whole social identification from his own state, adds nothing of his own when he interprets a fact in the light of German nationalistic dogmas. He is perfectly normal in that he is like the others of his group, but entirely abnormal by the tests recognized by citizens of other lands.

If the most interesting product of German idealism is a social and political ethics based upon Greek philosophy, the most curious product is the philosophy of history. The two things which the Germans have learned from history are, as Boutroux very succinctly puts it, first, "that history is not only the sequence of events in the life of humanity: it is also the judgment of God on the struggles and rivalry of nations. If some one people seems appointed by history to dominate the rest, this people is God's lieutenant or viceroy on earth, God himself, visible and tangible to his creatures. The second lesson the Germans have learned is that the existence of a people appointed to represent God is no myth, but that such a people does actually exist in the German people itself" (pp. 93-94). The matter, the non-ego beyond the frontier, must cease to mock at God's will and at history guided by His hand. Not merely in Heaven, but on earth, too, must His will be done. Is not doing the will of God the highest morality? That depends, of course, on various things; it depends on what God wills and on the nature of morality.

Now I have no idea of defining the nature of morality. I shall simply assume that Aristotle was right when he said that a man not a member of a polis was either a god or a beast, and that the writing of ethics in collectivistic, social terms is a great advance over the writing of it in terms of individual autonomy and individual conscience. Whatever else morality may involve, it involves fundamentally what Aristotle had in mind, whatever is incidental to partaking in the life of a well-organized cooperative group. Civilization is a cooperative enterprise, and it is by virtue of cooperative relations that the thing morality is possible. The point of this is that, bearing in mind the above quotation from Professor Munroe Smith, whatever the individual German may be at home, the German state has the status of either the god or the beast; it has nothing that can be called morality. On the other hand, the German conception is this: "The state is an eminently moral being; it is the

loftiest realization of freedom and justice. Consequently, whereas the individual, as regards the state, has only duties and no rights, the state, when dealing with individuals, has only rights and no duties. Its duty is to realize its essence, which is force, and so to become as strong as possible" (p. 188). And Aristotle's theory of slavery based on the distinction between Greeks and barbarians recurs in the German classification of peoples into the uncivilized, the half civilized, and the civilized (*die Vollkulturmenschen*). "To these latter, by virtue of their intrinsic superiority, belongs authority, the right to rule other men with a view to increasing their degree of culture and their participation in the work of the world" (p. 193). Add to this the exaltation of the universal in German philosophical tradition, and the idea that spirit exists only by virtue of a reorganization of matter, and it is quite clear that, logically at least, the frontiers of the German state must be the frontiers of existence.

A point of view that is dialectically developed is easy to state, much more so than an attitude that is hardly conscious because it has grown up naturally and spontaneously. France as a geographical expression is easily defined, and so is the programme of any particular enterprise; but Michel, in Donnay's play, found the *patrie* very hard to define: "Mais oui, la patrie, c'est tout ça—et bien, d'autres choses encore;" and Boutroux, "The individual's being is inseparable from sentiment, which is the very basis of his consciousness. Similarly a nation is, above all, a group of men united by the desire to live together, by a sense of solidarity, by community of joys and sorrows, by memories, aspirations and destinies" (pp. 209–210).

Thus it is natural enough that the French idea of nationality should seem inferior in philosophical precision to the German one, inferior, i. e., as an instrument with which one can operate dialectically. That is partly because the German idea has been fashioned as a dialectical instrument, and because the formulation of the "classical" tradition as an idea is what we have now to set about.

Whether M. Boutroux's Alsatian informant was altogether right in saying that the German language had no equivalent for *générosité* and the French language none for *Schadenfreude*, we need not decide. We do know, however, that the Germans idealize their hate. It is part of that robust loyalty which the categorical imperative prescribes. On this point there is an excellent article in the *Hibbert Journal* for April, 1917,⁶ from which I select three or four lines: "It is of interest to the student of national psychology to note that in 1836, only a few years after Goethe's utterance, Edgar

⁶ "National Hate," A. D. McLaren.

Quinet, who knew his Germany so intimately, and whose admiration of some aspects of the Teutonic mind was so profound, spoke of German hate as something peculiar in the category of national antipathies . . . a corrosive hate, he said [six years later] lay beneath an ardent desire for power and for wider recognition of Germany's greatness, and kept the whole nation in a state of fever." The utterance of Goethe alluded to is as follows. Goethe had been saying to Eckermann that national hate is a special kind of hate, and he continued: "It always displays the greatest strength and energy in the lowest stages of civilization. But there is a stage at which it vanishes altogether."

In the Victor Hugo Museum in Paris is a sheet of paper on which Hugo has written an exhortation to the Germans to come to Paris, Paris the heart of the world's intellectual life, the pole to which every free imagination ought naturally to turn. The Germans came a few years later, but not in the spirit in which Hugo had so ardently invited them. And some twenty years earlier Auguste Comte gave the following title to one of his works: "*Discours sur l'ensemble du positivisme, ou exposition sommaire de la doctrine philosophique et sociale propre à la grande république occidentale composée des cinq populations avancées, française, italienne, germanique, britannique, et espagnole, toujours solidaire depuis Charlemagne.*"

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THE PRAGMATIC METHOD

DEWEY'S essay on "The Need for a Recovery in Philosophy," which occupies the place of honor in *Creative Intelligence*, has aroused a great deal of comment and criticism. The essay presents the issues between pragmatism and non-pragmatic systems of philosophy in outline form, and with a minimum of detail. It affords, consequently, an excellent opportunity for the comparison of philosophic standpoints. The narrowing down of issues to fundamental propositions is frequently advisable in philosophy, and I wish to take advantage of this opportunity to make a few observations on the differences between pragmatism and idealism. The possibilities of such an inquiry are endless, and I must limit myself to the merest sketch of the ideas I have to present.

Although Dewey limits the object of his essay to "an attempt to forward the emancipation of philosophy from too intimate and ex-

¹ Quoted from McLaren's article, p. 407.